WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A headrest device for a vehicle seat, the headrest device comprising a headrest carried by at least one support designed to be secured to the back of the seat, said headrest device further comprising a stop device that is mounted to move between:

firstly an inactive position in which said stop device is adapted to enable the headrest to be moved downwards into a retracted position; and

secondly an active position in which said stop device is adapted to enable the headrest to be raised from its retracted position at least up to a low abutment position, and to prevent the headrest from being moved downwards beyond its low abutment position after it has been raised from its retracted position at least up to said low abutment position;

and said headrest device further comprising an actuator device adapted to move the stop device from its inactive position to its active position while the headrest is being moved into its retracted position.

2. A headrest device according to claim 1, further comprising an adjustment mechanism adapted to enable the headrest to move substantially vertically and as a whole, at least between a high position and said low abutment position.

3. A headrest device according to claim 1, in which:

the headrest is connected to the support via at least one substantially vertical pin;

the stop mechanism is disposed so that said pin slides relative to said stop mechanism between first and second positions while the headrest is being moved respectively between its retracted position and its low abutment position; and

the actuator device is adapted to interfere with said pin at least when the headrest reaches its retracted position, and then to move the stop device into its active position.

4. A headrest device according to claim 3, in which the stop device comprises at least one stop member urged resiliently towards the pin, said first stop member being disposed in resilient abutment against a wall interposed between said first stop member and the pin when the stop device is in the inactive position, the actuator device being connected to the stop device and being adapted to drive the stop device vertically while the headrest is being moved towards its retracted position, until the first stop member comes to face an unobstructed passageway making it possible for said first stop member to come into resilient abutment against the pin, said pin being provided with a stop notch which is disposed in register with the first stop member and in which said first stop member is adapted to engage when the pin is in its second position and when the stop device is in the active position, said stop notch being adapted to prevent the pin from sliding again towards its first position when the first stop member is engaged in the stop notch.

5. A headrest device according to claim 4, in which the stop device is carried by the support, which includes said wall against which the first stop branch abuts when the stop device is in the inactive position, and said unobstructed passageway is provided in said wall.

6. A headrest device according to claim 3, in which the actuator device comprises at least one second stop member that is urged resiliently towards the pin and that is disposed so that:

said second stop member penetrates into said stop notch when the pin is in an intermediate position between its second position and its first position; and

said second stop member drives the stop device from its inactive position to its active position when the pin slides from its intermediate position to its first position.

7. A headrest device according to claim 6, in which the stop notch has a cam surface adapted to enable the second stop member to disengage from said stop notch by sliding on said cam surface when the pin slides from its first position to its second position.

8. A headrest device according to claim 6, in which the first and second stop members are mutually parallel and substantially horizontal first and second branches of a single resilient wire.

9. A headrest device according to claim 8, in which the support comprises a bushing in which said pin slides, and said resilient wire is carried by said bushing.

10. A headrest device according to claim 9, in which the resilient wire further comprises substantially horizontal third and fourth branches which are substantially parallel to respective ones of the first and second stop branches and which co-operate with respective ones thereof to form respective U-shaped springs, each of which clamps around the bushing, and the metal wire further comprises a vertical segment which interconnects the first and second stop branches.

11. A headrest device according to claim 3, in which the headrest is mounted to slide on the pin between the high position and the low abutment position.

12. A vehicle seat having a seat back equipped with a headrest device according to claim 1, the support being secured to the seat back.